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ABSTRACT

This bulletin gives some of the results of an attitude survey on school desegregation in Riverside and Redlands, California. Children and parents were questioned. The results indicate that parents and students in Riverside reacted very positively to three years of integrated education. Anglo parents felt that their children were not having more difficulty in learning. Parents of all three groups (Negro, Mexican-American, and Anglo) reported favorable perceptions of busing, the quality of education, social acceptance, and home-school relationships. In the Redlands, the Negro and Mexican-American parents believed that integrated education represents a better education; they also felt welcome in the schools. The parents have rated the quality of desegregated education as high, although some parents do believe that there are more discipline problems. According to the parents, the children reacted positively to their school experiences, and teachers were quite friendly and helpful to the students. (Editor/JW)

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ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

IN

RIVERSIDE AND REDLANDS

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BULLETIN SERIES NO. 1
SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

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Center for the Study of Inter-
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University of California
Riverside, California

FOREWORD

"Attitudes Toward School Desegregation in Riverside and Redlands" inaugurates a series of bulletins by the Regional Dissemination Module of Title IV - Western Regional School Desegregation Project.

This bulletin deals with questions often raised about school desegregation. Data from Riverside and Redlands provide partial answers to these questions. Additional information to assist school systems in making decisions about desegregation is needed. Readers are urged to send us accounts of their experiences with school desegregation.

Mr. Tirso Serrano, Coordinator - Intergroup Relations, Redlands Unified School District, provided the information on desegregation in Redlands, California. Riverside data was taken from the report, "Parental Reaction to Desegregation and Busing After Three Years," written by Edward Lewis, June Lewis, David Emori and Wayne Brown, members of the Riverside Desegregation Study.

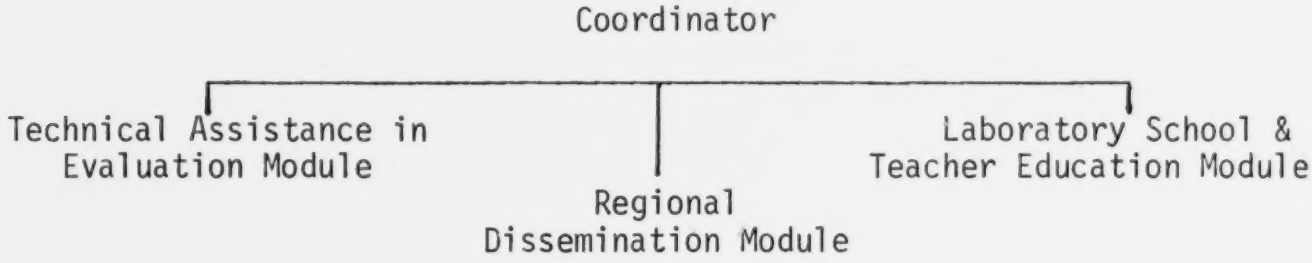
T I T L E I V

W E S T E R N R E G I O N A L

S C H O O L D E S E G R E G A T I O N P R O J E C T

Title IV federal funding established Western Regional School Desegregation Project at the University of California, Riverside. The Project exists to help school districts solve problems arising from school desegregation.

The Project has three modules; Research and Evaluation, Teacher Training - Laboratory School and Information Dissemination.



The Research and Evaluation Module helps districts plan and implement research designs for studying the effects of school desegregation. The Teacher Training - Laboratory School Module prepares teachers for the challenges of the multi-ethnic school. The Information Dissemination Module distributes information on school desegregation to school administrators and school board members.

The Information Module can serve you in several ways. We will research your requests about school desegregation. We plan to publish informative reports on data collected during three years of school desegregation in Riverside, California. Our program will include conferences, edited conference proceedings, in-service training programs, a bimonthly newsletter and a bulletin series.

We trust these services will be useful to you in planning and implementing your own program of school desegregation.

Richard Roessler
Editor

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

How often have you heard, "I'm for desegregation, but. . ."

Q Won't busing cause more problems than it solves?

A The majority of parents in Riverside reported that busing produces no additional problems. Redlands school children said that they enjoyed the bus ride. Their parents also reported that their children found the bus ride enjoyable.

Q Won't the quality of education suffer?

A Parents in Riverside and Redlands felt that the quality of education was the same or better after desegregation. Most parents saw no increase in learning difficulty for the children as a result of desegregation.

Q Won't desegregation cause undue emotional strain on the children?

A Riverside parents reported that their child liked his new school and did not want to be absent. Parents in Redlands said that their child felt accepted and was treated fairly.

Q Will teachers and children be friendly in the desegregated school?

A Parents felt that children and teachers were as friendly or more friendly in the desegregated schools.

Q Won't problems develop in social or after-school activities?

A Since desegregation, no additional problems with social activities were reported in Riverside.

Q Will the community accept desegregation?

A The Riverside Desegregation Study found that 87% of the parents were opposed to the idea of separate schools for the three ethnic groups.

ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

IN

RIVERSIDE AND REDLANDS

An Overview

1. Parents and students in Riverside reacted very positively to three years of integrated education. Busing produced few problems for the great majority of parents in Riverside. This same positive evaluation of integrated education characterized the feelings of Negro and Mexican-American parents and children in Redlands. Parents and children in Redlands voiced support of the busing program; parents said that busing does not detract from their child's education.

2. Throughout the three years of desegregation, the quality of education remained high in Riverside. Parents felt that staff and children were as friendly as before desegregation. Many parents said that their child likes to go to school, that he likes his present school and that he wants to be absent as little as possible. Anglo parents felt that teachers faced more classroom behavior problems, but no group of parents felt that their children were having more difficulty in learning.

3. To the Negro and Mexican-American parents in Redlands, integrated education represented a better education. Their children reported that they were more interested in school last year and that they were accepted by other students, teachers and the principal. According to the parents, teachers were interested in the children as individuals and as learners.

4. Generally speaking, Riverside parents reported no new problems in social and after-school activities. However, the percentage of Negro parents holding this opinion about social activities decreased in the three-year period from about 85% to about 70%. To explain this decrease, more research will be needed. More research is also necessary to explain the decline from 1967 to 1969 in the percentage of

parents who felt that the problems with after-school activities were the same or fewer. In 1967, between 88% and 93% reported no new problems in after-school activities because of desegregation. In 1969, 79% to 81% of the parents felt that way.

5. Parents of bused children in Redlands felt welcome in school. They indicated that they had visited school last year and that they could visit any time they wished. However, parents desired more home-school communication.

6. Parents of each Riverside group, Negro, Mexican-American and Anglo,[1] reacted positively to three years of desegregated education. In Redlands, parents and children involved in a busing program for desegregation reported favorable perceptions of busing, the quality of education, social acceptance and home-school relationships.

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[1]The accepted nomenclature for various ethnic groups varies from one region to another and from time to time as historic events make some designations more acceptable than others. We have decided to use the terms Anglo, Mexican-American and Negro rather than more recently popular identifications, e.g., Chicano, Black and so forth because the more traditional terms are more universally understood, are less regional, and are less time specific.

ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL DESEGREGATION
IN
RIVERSIDE AND REDLANDS

The Data

In 1966 Riverside closed three predominantly minority schools and bused children to schools in Anglo neighborhoods. From kindergarten through sixth grade, all of the bused Mexican-American and Negro children and a random sample of Anglo children were studied. Parents were also included in the sample. In the Riverside Study directed by Dr. Jane Mercer, data on parental reaction to desegregation were reported for two time periods, 1967 (one year after school desegregation) and 1969 (three years after school desegregation). This report presents parental opinions of these first three years of school desegregation in Riverside.

background

Also in this report you will learn how Mexican-American and Negro parents and their children evaluated the first year, 1969-70, of school desegregation and busing in Redlands. Mr. Tirso Serrano, Coordinator - Intergroup Relations Office, Redlands Unified School District, developed the questionnaires and supervised data collection for the Redlands study; 174 parents and 182 children participated in the investigation.

DOES BUSING CAUSE MORE PROBLEMS?

In Riverside after three years of busing, 74% of the parents of primary grade (Grade 1-3) children and 82% of the parents of intermediate grade (Grade 4-6) children did not think busing causes

more problems. A larger percentage of Mexican-American parents of primary grade children than of Anglo or Negro parents reported more problems with busing--40% in 1967 and 46% in 1969. However, this general trend of the same or fewer problems with busing held for the majority of all groups, Negro, Mexican-American and Anglo.

As in Riverside, desegregation in Redlands involved busing. Reaction to this idea in the beginning was not all positive. So it was imperative the Intergroup Relations director know how the bused children and parents evaluated the one-year busing period. Eighty-four percent of the children reported that they enjoyed riding the bus; 16% said that they did not enjoy riding the bus. Since 80% of the parents reported that their child enjoyed riding the bus, agreement between children and parents existed on this question. Only 18% of the parents indicated that their child did not like to ride the bus. According to 79% of the parents, busing does not detract from their child's education.

busing

HOW DO THE PARENTS EVALUATE THE QUALITY OF DESEGREGATED EDUCATION?

The results are fairly conclusive. Riverside parents say that the quality of desegregated education is the same or better. In both 1967 and 1969, a remarkably large percentage of the parents felt this way. In 1969, 83% of all parents of primary grade children and 90% of all parents of intermediate grade children saw no decrease in the quality of education after desegregation.

What do the parents have to say about desegregation in Redlands? Seventy-one percent reported that their child is more interested in school this year. Fifteen percent of the parents

did not respond, and 14% did not feel that their child was more interested. According to 71% of the parents, their child is receiving a better education now than he has in the past.

In the Riverside Desegregation Study, parental attitudes toward the quality of integrated education were elicited in two other questions: (1) Are teachers having the same or less difficulty teaching and (2) Are children having the same or less difficulty learning? In 1967, a majority of parents of primary and intermediate grade children said that teachers were experiencing no more difficulty in teaching. Such a majority opinion no longer prevailed by 1969. Less than 50% of the parents of primary grade and intermediate grade children reported that the teachers were having the same or fewer difficulties in teaching.

quality of education

Apparently Riverside parents believe that teachers are having more difficulty teaching in the desegregated setting. But these same parents felt that the children were not suffering. Anglo parents were convinced that the learning process was proceeding unimpaired. In both 1967 and 1969, 89% or more of the Anglo parents felt that for their children there had been no additional problems in learning. From 1967 to 1969, the Mexican-American parents increasingly felt this way. Among Mexican-American parents of primary grade children, 88% in 1969--an increase of 16% over 1967--reported that their children were having the same or less difficulty in learning. In 1969, 81% of the Mexican-American parents of intermediate grade children felt that their children were having the same or less difficulty in learning. No additional problems in

their child's learning were reported by 79% of the Negro parents of primary grade children and 90% of the Negro parents of intermediate grade children.

WHY DO SOME RIVERSIDE PARENTS FEEL THAT THE TEACHERS ARE FACING MORE DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING?

The data give one possible explanation. In 1967, 43% of the Anglo parents of primary grade children felt that there were more behavior problems in school. This figure rose to 64% in 1969. In general, the same trend held for Anglo parents of intermediate children; 45% in 1967 and 54% in 1969, said there were more behavior problems. Mexican-American and Negro parents, primary and intermediate, felt that behavior problems in the school were the same or less.

behavior problems

HOW DO CHILDREN REACT TO DESEGREGATION?

In 1969, at least 86% of any Riverside parent group--Anglo, Mexican-American or Negro--reported that their primary grade child likes to go to school. At least 78% said that their child does not want to be absent from school, and at least 70% said that their child likes his present school. The same attitudes characterize the parents of intermediate grade children in Riverside.

The percentage of Negro parents in Riverside who said that their child occasionally wished to go to another school increased from 10% in 1967 to 30% in 1969. A similar increase occurred among Negro parents of intermediate grade children. Since the data do not explain this increase, further consultation with the community

would be recommended.

According to their parents, children in Redlands reacted positively to school desegregation. Eighty-nine percent of the parents said that their child has been treated fairly in school by the other students. According to 94% of the parents, their child accepted other students in school, and 90% of the parents said that their child was accepted by other students. Did race cause many problems among students? Seventy-two percent of the parents said, "No."

school interaction

Redlands parents had positive perceptions of teacher-student interaction. Ninety-two percent of the parents felt that their child had been treated fairly in school by the teachers; 94% said that the principal had treated their child fairly. Furthermore, 92% of the parents reported that teachers were interested in the learning of the children. Eighty-nine percent of the parents believed that the teachers were interested in the child as a person.

Certainly one of the most important dimensions of the desegregation process is the way the incoming student feels in the classroom. Does he feel accepted by teachers and students? According to 67% of the bused students in Redlands, the teachers treated them fairly. On this question, 9% of the students felt that they were treated unfairly, and 24% did not answer.

ARE THE TEACHERS AND CHILDREN AS FRIENDLY IN THE DESEGREGATED SITUATION?

Without question, parents in Riverside reported that children

and teachers are as friendly as before. Over 88% of the parents of primary and intermediate children said that classmates and teachers were friendly in the desegregated schools.

school atmosphere

DID ANY PROBLEMS DEVELOP IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (E.G., SCHOOL FRIENDSHIPS, PARTIES) AND IN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (E.G., SCOUTS)?

The data for Riverside provide a decisive answer to this question. Parents of primary grade and intermediate grade children agree, "In desegregated schools there are the same or fewer problems with social activities." By 1969, three years after desegregation, over 90% of the Anglo parents and over 88% of the Mexican-American parents gave such a positive response. Among Negro parents a trend appeared that requires further study. From 1967 to 1969, a declining percentage of Negro parents felt that problems with social activities were the same or fewer. Eighty-six percent of Negro parents of primary grade children in 1967 reported the same or fewer problems. In 1969, two years later, 70% felt this way. A similar decline appeared among Negro parents of intermediate grade children.

social activities

When asked whether there were the same or fewer problems with after-school activities, parents in general agreed that no new problems had arisen. In 1967 and in 1969, there were no group differences on this question. But a troublesome question remains: Why, from 1967 to 1969, was there a decline in the percentage of parents of both primary and intermediate children who felt this way? In 1967, 88% of the parents of primary grade children and 93% of the parents of intermediate grade children reported the same or fewer problems with after-school activities. By 1969, these

percentages had dropped respectively to 79% and 81%. Further research is needed to determine whether these trends will level off or continue. Of course, the most important question is, "Why do some parents feel that there are more problems with after-school activities?"

HOW DO THE PARENTS FEEL ABOUT THE NEW SCHOOL?

Several goals for comprehensive desegregation have been proposed. One criterion is the degree to which parents of the incoming students are structurally integrated into the life of the new school. In the Redlands survey, several questions pertain to this criterion. Eighty-three percent of the parents reported that they visited school this year; 87% said they can visit the school at any time, and 93% reported that they felt welcome and accepted during their school visits.

school and home

Though 66% of the parents felt that they had been contacted by school personnel more this year, 71% desired more school-home contact. Twenty-six percent of the bused parents had become involved in school activities (PTA, Carnival, Room Mother) this year; 71% had not.

In summary, parents of bused children in Redlands felt accepted at school and felt that they can visit school at any time. About one-fourth of the parents were involved in school activities. School-home contact increased this year, but more is desired by the parents.

WHAT IS THE OVERALL PARENTAL REACTION TO INTEGRATION EFFORTS IN RIVERSIDE?

Should we go back to separate schools for the different ethnic groups? The Riverside Desegregation Study team concluded their report in this way:

consensus

> There was virtual consensus on the part of all three ethnic groups. Eighty-seven percent of all the parents of children in Grades 3-5, and 87% of the parents of children in Grades 6-9 were opposed to the idea of Negro, Mexican-American and Anglo children attending separate schools.